

The poem describes every principal church and shrine at Rome with the regularity of a modern guide-book, but instead of mentioning the sights of historical and artistic interest, it states the number of years' pardon obtainable at each place. Thus St. Peter's has twenty-nine steps. When you go up or down, if you say a prayer you shall have seven years' pardon for every step. Inside there are seven principal altars—the Veronica, Our Lady's, St. Simon's, St. Andrew's, St. Gregory's, Pope Leo's, and that of the Holy Cross. At each of these the visitor can obtain seven years' pardon and seven Lents. At the high altar pardon is given for twenty years. If, however, the traveller times his visit to the Holy City between Holy Thursday and Lammas, he obtains fourteen thousand years' pardon, but on the Day of Assumption of the Virgin only one thousand. The other shrines of the city are treated one by one with the same mathematical preciseness.<sup>1</sup>

Pilgrimage was often made vicariously. Money was left by dying persons in their wills, to pay pilgrims to go for them to the Holy Places in Italy and the East, or even to the local shrines in the neighbourhood of the testator.<sup>2</sup> In Norfolk alone there were at least eight such places. Walsingham and Canterbury were the two principal centres in England, but Glastonbury, Durham, York, Norwich, St. Edmundsbury, and Westminster were well known to the pious. At these places went on the sale of relics to pilgrims, which Erasmus a hundred years later held up to the scorn of the world. Bound some of them, old pagan superstitions still lingered under a very thin veil. The 'good sword of Winfarthing was a precious relic that helped to recover stolen horses and to shorten the lives of refractory husbands. Some holy wells purified from unchastity, others granted the wishes of the drinker, after a suitable gift had been made to the priest in charge. Gifts laid on the shrines of St. Petronel saved from fever. The ratcatcher propitiated St. Gertrude; St. Apollonia cured the toothache,<sup>3</sup>

It is not wonderful that so pious a Catholic  
as Langland

<sup>1</sup> See Ap.

<sup>2</sup> *Retrospective Review*, 1828, ii, 811.

<sup>3</sup> *Cults*, 157-94; Jusserand's *Vie Nomade*, Text, and Appendix, on Pilgrimages; *Retrospective Review*, 1828, ii, 301-14; Fuller's *Church History*, 331. ed. 1656.